

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5, 14 and 26 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1-3, 5 and 14 are amended and claim 26 is added. Claims 1-3, 5 and 14 are amended for clarity. Support for the amendments and for new claim 26 can be found, for example, in paragraphs [0343]-[0364] and [0376] of the published application. No new matter is added.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Vig at the telephone interview held September 14 are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below, which constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 5 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for allegedly being "vague to determine the scope of the claimed subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention." Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The Office Action, on page 2, states "it is not clear [how] the determination is made to provide access to the image." The Office Action also asks "how does a user providing the link in the message know what the correct link should be to access the image." The fact that certain features are either broadly claimed or unclaimed does not render a claim indefinite. That is, broad features do not render a claim indefinite, nor do unclaimed features render a claim indefinite. Thus, the claims are not indefinite merely because there are broadly recited features. One skilled in the art would understand Applicants' claims particularly after having read the application.

Also, the amendments to the claims provide further clarity. For example, claim 1 recites "an electric album service registered with a user" and "a screen for the user to prepare a message to be carried by the bulletin board," both of which further clarify the invention. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 5 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kikugawa (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2007/0050459) in view of Watanabe (U.S. Patent No. 6,578,072). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 is directed to a method for providing an electric bulletin board service including messages that may or may not include an image. In particular, claim 1 recites "the system including the requested image as an included image with the prepared message in the bulletin board only when the stored setting of the requested image indicates that the requested image is permitted to be browsed by the third party; and the system banning the requested image from being included in the prepared message in the bulletin board when the stored setting of the requested image indicates that the requested image is not permitted to be browsed by the third party."

In rejecting claim 1, the Office Action cites Kikugawa as allegedly disclosing an electronic bulletin board and Watanabe for allegedly disclosing an online digital photographic service where digital images are disclosed on the network only to persons that a user allows to browse through the images. Even if these references disclose such features, Kikugawa and Watanabe fail to disclose the above-quoted features of claim 1. In particular, these references fail to disclose, and would not have rendered obvious, a system that includes images and a system that bans images as claimed because Kikugawa does not contain any disclosure or suggestion that a system that creates a message in an electronic bulletin board should include such features as the above-quoted features of claim 1. Moreover, the mere fact that Watanabe discloses images that can be viewed only by persons allowed to browse the images does not even suggest that a system would include images or ban images in a message as claimed. Thus, as discussed during the telephone interview, the applied references fail to disclose or to have rendered obvious all of the features of claim 1.

Claims 2, 3, 5, and 14 are patentable by reason of their dependency from independent claim 1 as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

New claim 26 is also patentable at least by reason of its dependency from independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features it recites.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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